

April 26, 2005



OFFICE OF RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENT

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS FOR NURSING RESEARCH INITIATIVE

1. REASON FOR ISSUE: This Office of Research and Development (ORD) announcement solicits scientific research proposals from nurse investigators.

2. SUMMARY OF MAJOR CHANGES: The principal changes in this document clarify and incorporate additional information on types of research projects, high priority issues, and examples of possible topics. Specific new information includes:

a. Paragraph 2, provides the research foci of interest in this request for applications for ORD support of scientific research projects.

b. Appendix A includes general instructions and guidelines for submission to ORD.

3. RESPONSIBLE OFFICE: The Office of Research and Development (124M) is responsible for the contents of this VHA request for proposals. Questions may be referred to (202) 254-0209, or by facsimile at (202) 254-0461.

5. RESCISSION: This VHA request for proposals rescinds VHA Informational Letter IL 12-98-008, dated August 24, 1998.

6. RECERTIFICATION: Until further notice, research proposals may be submitted for any of the regular receipt dates established by the Health Services Research and Development Service.



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**DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
Veterans Health Administration
Washington DC 20420**

**OFFICE OF RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT
PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENT
Request for Proposals**

NURSING RESEARCH INITIATIVE

1. Purpose. The Office of Research and Development (ORD), Veteran's Health Administration (VHA), is pleased to re-announce the opportunity to submit investigator-initiated Nursing Research proposals for review. The Nursing Research Initiative (NRI) solicits proposals from investigators in an effort to:

- a. Encourage new research projects pertaining to nursing topics, and
- b. Expand the pool of nurse investigators within the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) health care system.

Proposals appropriate for Biomedical Laboratory Research and Development Service (BLR&D), Clinical Science Research and Development Service (CSR&D), Rehabilitation Research and Development Service (RR&D), and Health Services Research and Development Service (HSR&D) will be accepted.

Although nurses have always been an integral part of VA research teams, VHA nurses remain underrepresented as principal investigators (PIs). The Nursing Research Initiative (NRI), initiated by the Undersecretary for Health, represents a commitment by VHA to increase research opportunities for nurses. It is intended that the NRI will encourage the development of nurse investigators to conduct independent research focused on high priority, VA mission-oriented areas of investigation. Topic areas of interest described in this solicitation were determined by the Office of Research and Development, with input from the Office of Nursing Services.

2. Research Foci. Applications submitted under this initiative should be relevant to advancing nursing practice in the fields of health services, rehabilitation, clinical science or biomedical laboratory research. The focus should be patient-centered and relevant to veterans. Interdisciplinary and multi-site research projects and pilot studies are encouraged. Types of research projects, high priority issues, and examples of possible topics are provided below.

- a. Develop and test models of work redesign (including consideration of complexity of work) and healthcare delivery (e.g. explore care coordination within and across continuum of healthcare services) that enhance outcomes.

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- b. Develop and test delivery system organization, structure and strategies to improve deployment health care across VA and the transition of health care from the Department of Defense to VA.
- c. Evaluation of the translation of research, that is evidence based practice, to improve health care (e.g. impact of research on improving patient outcomes, enhancing the implementation of interventions, and reducing the cost of care through greater involvement of community services and family caregivers).
- d. Research assessing the impacts of nursing interventions, nurse health, and/or nurse safety on patient outcomes, cost effectiveness, cost benefit and cost utility.
- e. Rehabilitation research on effective methods for improving, maintaining and / or preventing decline in functional status of veterans.
- f. Biomedical laboratory research that explores basic biological and physiological principles in humans (e.g. testing different methods of investigation of tissues, blood and biological specimens; point of care testing compared with provider or family caregiver use of home tests).

4. Preceptor/Mentor Requirements

- a. Proposed Nurse Principal Investigators (PIs) with substantial research experience and a history of significant independent funding at the VA Merit Review or equivalent level (i.e., a R01 research grant) may submit a proposal without a preceptor. Appropriate qualifications should be described in the proposal.
- b. Other nurse PIs need to be guided by a preceptor with an earned doctorate in nursing, medicine or another health care related discipline.
 - (1) The preceptor must be available on the staff of the medical center and/or on the faculty of the affiliated university. It is essential that the preceptor have research experience, a significant history of independent research funding, publications in peer-reviewed journals, and be willing to commit, in writing, to guiding the nurse investigator's development for the duration of the award.
 - (2) The Preceptor's role is to guide the nurse PI with respect to:
 - (a) The development of a successful proposal.
 - (b) Assisting the PI in facing the ongoing challenges inherent in the conduct of research, and ensuring the successful completion and dissemination of the research.
 - (c) The PI's development as a fully independent, funded investigator.

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(d) Any other requirements specific to the VA system and its research program.

NOTE: *If the preceptor is not employed by VA, the candidate needs a Mentor who has a paid appointment at the VA facility. In particular, the Mentor will assume the responsibilities described in subparagraph 4b(2)(d).*

6. Eligibility

a. Nurse investigators who hold a VA appointment of at least 5/8 time are eligible to apply. Any questions about eligibility may be referred to the HSR&D Eligibility Coordinator (see below). All principal investigators and co-principal investigators must meet VA and NRI eligibility criteria.

b. Co-investigators, consultants and support staff may be non-VA employees reimbursed through various mechanisms such as contracts and Intergovernmental Personnel Act (IPA) agreements.

7. Application Procedure.

A proposal must be submitted by the PI through the Associate Chief of Staff (ACOS) for R&D and medical center Director, and must be received by June 15 or December 15 in the format described in Handbook 1204.1, Appendix B and in Appendix A of this request for proposals.

a. Proposal Preparation and Review.

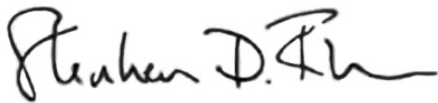
Appendix A, the NRI Amendment to *“Health Services Research and Development Service Investigator-Initiated Research (IIR) Instructions for Applicants*, contains the instructions that apply to preparing a NRI proposal. The PI will provide leadership in the proposal development process. Proposals must undergo review by the local VA medical center R&D Committee and be submitted through the ACOS for R&D and the medical center Director. Proposals will be evaluated for scientific merit by an ad hoc committee selected from members of the HSR&D, BLR&D, CSR&D, and RR&D Scientific Merit Review Boards. The committee will include nurses and other experts in the specific fields of research addressed in the proposals. Recommendations will be presented to the Chief Research and Development Officer in consultation with the Director, Health Services Research and Development Service and, if appropriate, other Service Director(s). Budgets shall conform to the relevant service’s requirements. The Chief Research and Development Officer will make the final selection for the projects to be funded.

b. Research Methods. All proposed studies are expected to use research designs and methods that maximize the validity, reliability, generalizability and usefulness of findings. While the research needs to be grounded in the realities of VA practice and address real world information needs, it also needs to have a clear theoretical framework, demonstrate familiarity with the pertinent literature, and employ a data collection and analysis strategy that will yield valid conclusions. The research needs to be designed to maximize the eventual application of findings and conclusions.

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c. **Mailing Address.** Proposals may be submitted by regular mail or Federal Express, via the ACOS for R&D and the medical center Director. Submit proposals to Review Office (124R), Nursing Research Initiative, Health Services Research and Development Service, Department of Veterans Affairs, 810 Vermont Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20420.

d. **Information.** Initial contact and questions should be directed to the local VA medical center's Office of R&D. Additional questions may be directed to Susan Schiffner at (202) 254-0209.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Stephan D. Fihn". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Stephan" being more prominent than the last name "Fihn".

Stephan D. Fihn, MD, MPH
Acting Chief Research and Development Officer

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APPENDIX A

**NRI AMENDMENT TO
“HSR&D INVESTIGATOR-INITIATED RESEARCH INSTRUCTIONS FOR
APPLICANTS”**

1. All investigators submitting a proposal under the Nursing Research Initiative (NRI) program must use the Health Services Research and Development (HSR&D) Investigator-Initiated Research (IIR) guidelines (Handbook 1204.1, Appendix B) and this NRI Amendment.
2. NRI Applications must incorporate the following:
 - a. On VA Form 10-1313-1, Merit Review Application, enter "NRI" in Item 3 (Review Group).
 - b. On VA Form 10-1313-3, Current Funds and First Year Request, list mentor and/or preceptor under personnel.
 - c. For each mentor and/or preceptor, include the following forms:
 1. VA Form 10-1313-5/6 Combined Biographical Form
 2. VA Form 10-1313-7, Total VA and Non-VA Research Support
 3. VA Form 10-1313-8, Total VA and Non-VA Research/Development Support
 - d. If there is a mentor and/or preceptor listed on this project, include in the Project Management Plan of the Proposal Narrative a detailed explanation of the specific role and or purpose of the mentor and/or preceptor, as well as the relationship the PI will have with this (these) individual(s). Specifically address the following:
 1. The availability of the mentor and/or preceptor
 2. The frequency of their meetings with the PI and research team
 3. The research, methodological, and/or substantive topical knowledge brought to this project by the mentor and/or preceptor